Quality Physical Education: A Commentary on Effective Physical Education Teaching

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In my commentary in response to the 3 articles (McKenzie & Lounsbery, 2013; Rink, 2013; Ward, 2013), I focus on 3 areas: (a) content knowledge, (b) a holistic approach to physical education, and (c) policy impact. I use the term quality teaching rather than “teacher effectiveness.” Quality teaching is a term with the potential to move our attention beyond a focus merely on issues of effectiveness relating to the achievement of prespecified objectives. I agree with Ward that teacher content knowledge is limited in physical education, and I argue that if the student does not have a connection to or relationship with the content, this will diminish their learning gains. I also argue for a more holistic approach to physical education coming from a broader conception. Physical educators who teach the whole child advocate for a plethora of physical activity, skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes that foster healthy and active playful lifestyles. Play is a valuable educational experience. I also endorse viewing assessment from different perspectives and discuss assessment through a social-critical political lens. The 3 articles also have implications for policy. Physical education is much broader than just physical activity, and we harm the future potential of our field if we adopt a narrow agenda. Looking to the future, I propose that we broaden the kinds of research that we value, support, and appreciate in our field.

Keywords: content knowledge, holistic approach, policy impact

I am honored to be asked to write a commentary on the three articles on effective teaching in physical education (McKenzie & Lounsbery, 2013; Rink, 2013; Ward, 2013). During the last 20 years, I have admired the work of Rink, McKenzie, and Ward, who are leading academics in our field, and they have influenced my scholarship. I respect and admire the research studies they have carried out and appreciate the time and effort they expended in these articles. It is not easy to put down on paper one’s position on “effective teaching in physical education,” and I applaud the quality of scholarship that is demonstrated in these articles.

Writing this review has been a challenging task for me, and I have sought counsel from several colleagues in this process. We all know teaching is a messy business, and due to the complexity of the teaching process, any attempt to comment on or improve effectiveness must be located in a deep understanding of the nature of teachers’ work and the culture of schooling (Ovens, Hopper, & Butler, 2013). These manuscripts provide us with thoughtful academic comment on important areas of concern for our field: content knowledge, student inactivity, and the constructing of “measures” to acknowledge learning. I agree with Rink’s (2013) statement: “The difficulty in identifying the concept of effectiveness in teaching lies in the complexity of teaching” (p. 408). In my commentary, I hope to present a broad conceptualization of physical education that argues for a holistic approach. I will focus on three areas that the articles address and will integrate these notions while...
responding to the manuscripts: (a) content knowledge, (b) a holistic approach to physical education, and (c) policy impact.

In this commentary, I will use the term quality teaching in physical education rather than “teacher effectiveness.” Quality teaching is also used by Darling-Hammond (1997) in general education and by SHAPE America – The Society of Health and Physical Educators in the “Shape of the Nation” report (National Association of Sport and Physical Education [NASPE], 2012), which was a major U.S. report on physical education. More recently, the policy statement for physical education from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014) used the term quality physical education. In addition, the term effective teaching has been associated with the research movement that sought links between what teachers do in the class or gymnasium and what students learn. Researchers have made judgments concerning the degree to which the intentions of the teacher have resulted in desired student-learning outcomes. An effective teacher was one who could achieve their stated objectives (usually expressed in behavioral terms); however, sometimes the evaluation of effective practice is made based on fidelity to a curriculum rather than student-learning outcomes. “Consideration of the worthwhileness, the educational purpose, of a curriculum activity was not necessary or indeed expected” (Tinning, Macdonald, Wright, & Hickey, 2001, p. 303).

Like these authors, I share a concern with the use of the term effectiveness in relation to the issue of good teaching and prefer instead to use the term quality teaching. Quality teaching is a term that has the potential to move our attention beyond a focus merely on issues of effectiveness relating to the achievement of prespecified objectives. The question for us to ponder is, “What is quality physical education?” One possible definition (Hardman, Murphy, & Tonks, 2012) allows for an understanding of education as a complex system embedded in a political, social, cultural, and economic context, and this definition provides a rationale for using the term quality teaching in physical education rather than “teacher effectiveness.”

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

There is a concern that teacher content knowledge is limited in physical education (Ward, 2013). Ward suggests that teachers’ lack of content knowledge has resulted in a continuation of the predominant “multiple-activity approach” in physical education (Kirk, 2010; Metzler, 2011; Ward, 2013). I would like to broaden the notion of content knowledge to align more closely with Shulman’s (1987) notion of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Shulman defines content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge separately and then refers to PCK as “that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding” (p. 8). Shulman also notes that PCK is highly contextualized. I do not think our scholarship pays enough attention to the specific pedagogical knowledge that is required for a teacher to provide quality teaching in physical education.

I agree with Siedentop (2002) and now Ward (2013) that there has been, and continues to be, a lack of content knowledge in physical education, and I applaud Ward (1999, 2013) for drawing this to our attention and taking the lead on this important area of inquiry. He states: “Without a deeper understanding of content, teachers will be unable to teach meaningful outcomes in physical education” (2013, p. 438). However, I would argue that it is PCK that has the potential to create the positive learning environment or positive relationships for the student to connect to the learning. In New Zealand, when my colleagues and I work with nonspecialist primary school teachers (elementary school classroom teachers) to prepare them to teach physical education, these different kinds of knowledge become more apparent. We work with teachers to develop their physical education content knowledge and then work with them while they are teaching to develop their physical education pedagogical knowledge, and then we “hold our breath” and hope that they develop PCK. The competent classroom teachers with whom we have the pleasure to work struggle when they are faced with organizing and managing 24 to 30 student bodies on a field or in the gymnasium—essentially they lack pedagogical knowledge in this physical education context. Developing content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge takes a great amount of time, effort, and persistence on behalf of the teachers. Content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are both necessary but not sufficient for PCK to emerge from the teacher.

For researchers who spend time in schools, it is easy to agree with the research and continuing professional development work that Ward (1999, 2013) has presented. He states that we have frequently observed a trend toward minimizing “the relationship of the student to the content” (2013, p. 436). If the student does not have a connection to or relationship with the content, this will diminish their learning gains. This is a key area of consideration in any learning situation. Relationships, whether they be with the student and the content or a relationship with the student and the teacher, are of enormous value to learning—relationships matter (Cornelius-White, 2007; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011).

Ward (2013) informs us that teachers in physical education are now beginning to be held accountable for student learning and that this form of accountability in the United States is generally based on the National Standards (SHAPE America, 2014; Table 1). Ward (2013) argues that the standards should be a minimum requirement and that teachers need to be teaching beyond the standards. Although this is a nice ideal, is this realistic when most teachers
perhaps get close to attaining Standard 1 (students demonstrate competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns) and Standard 3 (students being physically active)? This concept of teaching beyond the standards is a worthwhile ideal, but first we need to encourage teachers to teach all five standards competently. Rink (2013) admits that “The national standards are designed to develop a physically active lifestyle but the contribution of each of those standards to this goal is critical and yet to be determined” (p. 409).

In physical education, Standard 1 (The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns) has been a focus of our field (Ennis, 2011; Silverman, 2011). Over the years, Rink (2013) has drawn our attention to the notion of quality instruction. Rink has always supported the development of motor skills and the progression of quality tasks that are needed to achieve that goal. Ward’s (2013) focus on content knowledge also emphasizes this notion of “the quality of the task.” Motor skills have often been considered the major content of physical education. When I talk about motor skills, I use a broad definition that includes: psychomotor skills (such as locomotor, nonlocomotor, manipulative, and nonmanipulative skills), tactics, strategies, creative movement education, and a wide range of movement experiences that may include but are not limited to dance, games, gymnastics, outdoor education skills, martial arts, and so on. However, even though we have this focus on motor skills, we still have not met this standard. If we look at empirical evidence by McKenzie and Lounsbery (2013) using the System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time (SOFIT), we should be alarmed:

Studies using the instrument typically find very limited time dedicated specifically for skill learning, especially at the secondary school levels. For example, large-scale studies in the United States have shown the following proportions of lesson time allocated to motor skill development: elementary schools, 10 to 15% (McKenzie et al., 1995; Nader, 2003); middle schools, 5 to 12% (McKenzie et al., 2000, 2006); and high schools, 3 to 4% (Lounsbery, Holt, Monnot, & McKenzie, 2013; Smith, Lounsbery, & McKenzie, in press). (p. 424)

These findings suggest that many teachers are failing to provide students with adequate motor skill development. This issue has been around for a long time; in 1989, Mike Metzler also found that students spent minimal time in “motor-appropriate” activity. This evidence calls to mind Larry Locke’s (1977) unforgettable concept of nonteaching—that is, teachers who throw out the ball, have students perform mindless calisthenics, and do not teach students how to perform the tasks and certainly do not have task progressions for skill learning. The situation is even bleaker for nonspecialists teaching physical education. Constantines, Montalvo, and Silverman (2013) recently reported that physical education specialists provided more “motor skill practice” compared with nonspecialists who provided game play. Nonspecialists gave fewer tasks resulting in fewer practice opportunities for students. Physical education specialists offered twice as many practice trials, and students of nonspecialists had approximately one third appropriate practice trials. These data strongly suggest that teachers of physical education in the United States need to make substantial changes in the amount of time they allocate for the content of motor skill development if it is to be a major outcome for physical education. In her article, Rink (2013) picks up on this notion when she comments that “Although most of the teacher effectiveness research done in our field has made the assumption that motor skills are important learning outcomes, the current literature would suggest that may be a false or incomplete assumption” (p. 409). The attainment of a broad content knowledge of motor skills has not been developed to its fullest potential in our public schools. To compound this issue, there has been an enduring debate in our field regarding what is the appropriate “content knowledge” and “pedagogical knowledge” for physical education.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION

I would argue for a more holistic approach to physical education than is presented in the three articles. None of the three articles addresses the affective domain of learning. Where is the affective domain in this discussion? Where are the emotions and the social interactions and interpersonal skills that are part of physical education? Although these elements may be missing from the three articles, they are,

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<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K–12 Physical Education</th>
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<td><strong>Standard 1:</strong> The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.</td>
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<td><strong>Standard 2:</strong> The physically literate individual applies knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics related to movement and performance.</td>
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<td><strong>Standard 3:</strong> The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.</td>
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<td><strong>Standard 4:</strong> The physically literate individual exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.</td>
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<td><strong>Standard 5:</strong> The physically literate individual recognizes the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.</td>
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Source: SHAPE America (2014).
However, explicit in Standard 4 and Standard 5 of the U.S. National Standards for Physical Education (SHAPE America, 2014). If you talk to physical education teachers in schools, they will tell you that they value social and emotional skills and their development in physical education. We need to educate the whole child! The National Standards (SHAPE America, 2014) support pedagogy to address the needs of the whole child; physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. The whole-child perspective is critically important today in a world where sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy eating practices are just two of many problems that some children and adolescents face; others are mental and emotional distress, unsafe school environments, bullying, uncaring home and school environments, substance abuse, lack of quality nutrition, and malnutrition (Clarke et al., 2013; Hellison & Wright, 2011). As Ennis (2011) argues, “Physical educators, who teach the whole child, advocate not only daily participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity but also the skills, knowledge, and perceptions of positive physical self-worth that foster healthy, active lifestyles” (p. 7). Although here Ennis (2011) makes no explicit reference to social and emotional, I would add that the social and emotional aspect of what we do as physical educators is paramount. Some instructional models or model-based practices (Fletcher & Casey, in press) in our field are designed to educate the whole child (Metzler, 2011). The assumptions and learning priorities of these models address individual needs, interests, and social and emotional abilities of participants within sport education (Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2011), games or Teaching Games for Understanding (Griffin, Mitchell, & Oslin, 1997; Harvey & Jarrett, 2013), cooperative learning (Dyson & Casey, 2012), and Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR; Hellison, 2011). I would argue for what Ennis (2011) calls “the use of developmentally appropriate conceptually based curricular approaches that use affective and emotionally meaningful knowledge presentations to address students’ concerns and cultural beliefs that may limit or facilitate their willingness to participate in physical activity” (p. 12). Ennis (2006) also reminds us that these are not totally new concepts: “These forms of activity were thought to integrate mind and body and give play meaning to children and to the society as a whole. Thus, play became a valuable educational experience rather than an activity in and of itself” (p. 44, emphasis added). Recent research has shown that teachers can build social and emotional skills in physical education (Dyson & Casey, 2012). Wright and others have also argued for student-centered learning in their growing body of work on TPSR (Hellison & Wright, 2011; Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2013; Pascual et al., 2011).

In an attempt to think more broadly, I feel it is important to address two other areas in this commentary: (a) student attitudes to physical education, and (b) taking a social-critical theoretical stance. We want kids to leave physical education with good attitudes and feeling motivated to participate and efficacious about movement (Carlson, 1995; Silverman, 2011). Leading scholars remind us that motor skill competence, perceptions of competence, and body image are key factors in students developing positive attitudes toward physical education and physical activity (Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007). We do not want to turn out kids who are fit and skilled but have a poor attitude to activity and will not be physically active for the rest of their lives. Phillips and Silverman (2012) argue, “Our physical activity behavior, whether or not we choose to go to the gym or go for a run, is impacted by attitude, and these behaviors and attitudes are strongly influenced by our experiences in physical education” (p. 316). I am concerned, as other research has shown (Silverman, 2011), that there is a decline in positive attitudes to physical education as students progress in grade level. We need to build positive attitudes toward physical education in an inclusive manner that has respect and understanding for gender, cultural, and race issues (Fitzpatrick, 2013; Tinning, 2010).

Recently, I have learned to “think outside the box.” My New Zealand colleagues and friends have provided me with a greater understanding and appreciation for the social-critical perspective. The New Zealand and Australian Health and Physical Education curriculum includes a strong sociocritical dimension. Social-critical scholars advocate the use of physical education to assist students in examining the social, cultural, and political messages that often appear as hidden curricula in the schools and community and that are pervasive in the media. They draw our attention to conceptualizations of racial, indigenous, gender, and body culture issues and concerns with the intention of challenging relations of power they deem harmful (Fitzpatrick, 2013; Hay & Penney, 2013; Kirk & Tinning, 1990; Penney & Evans, 1999; Tinning, 2010).

POLICY, ISSUES, AND CONCERNS

Taken as a whole, these three articles have implications for policy by addressing content knowledge, physical activity, and assessment and measurement in physical education. In considering policy implications, my overall concern is that the focus of physical education will become too narrow. Ward (2013) reiterates that we live in a policy environment; Rink (2013) proposes that we need to “measure up” to the standards; and McKenzie and Lounsbery (2013) suggest that we can adopt a public health agenda and focus on physical activity. I believe that we are at a pivotal point in the history of the field of physical education and policy issues are paramount. In fact, recently, Kirk (2013) challenged us to consider what the “educational value” of physical education is.
Several powerful forces that appear like “the perfect storm” are coming together to impact the policy environment in physical education. On the one hand is a focus on the obesity epidemic, and as a result, physical education has become more important to the public health agenda and medical profession. For example, legislation in most U.S. states now requires increased physical education; however, this comes mostly in the form of physical activity, and these mandated laws are generally unfunded (Dyson, Wright, Amis, Ferry, & Vandaman, 2011). Compounding this, the other powerful force is a focus in education on standards, accountability, and measures, which have a direct impact on teachers and their students. In their commentaries, Ward (2013) and Rink (2013) note that our subject matter is marginalized. Physical education has been marginalized for years. But now, mainly because of increased reported levels of childhood overweight/obesity, we are getting more attention from the public health agenda, the medical profession, the media, education, and the wider society. This attention has benefits in the form of more funding opportunities (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Carol M. White Physical Education Program grants) but also has some pitfalls. As mentioned, many states now legislate to increase the amount of physical education or physical activity, and politicians want results, evidence, and data even when there is no fiscal support to increase physical activity. With concerns over ever-rising health care costs in the United States, legislators have done the cost-benefit analysis and see the benefit of reducing sedentary behavior and increasing student physical activity to decrease health costs. Nonetheless, it is not as simple as just increasing physical activity and decreasing caloric intake (Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014).

As Ward (2013) reminds us—and this is explored in more detail by McKenzie and Lounsbery (2013)—there are studies in our field (Sallis et al., 2012; Siedentop, 2009) that have had impact on policy. A large number of states have enacted legislation, but there are only isolated stories of success. An example of mandated policy change occurred in Tennessee and Mississippi when in 2006 and 2007, laws were passed for each K–12 student to be physically active at least 90 min in Tennessee and 120 min in Mississippi each week. There was no funding associated with this mandated law. In the schools we studied, there was a progressive policy but with no change in students’ physical education or physical activity (Amis, Wright, Dyson, Vardaman, & Ferry, 2012; Dyson, Wright, et al., 2011).

The first policy implication of this confluence of increased attention to our area combined with a focus on standards, accountability, and assessment is the danger that the focus of physical education becomes too narrow. One such focus would be an over-reliance on physical activity. McKenzie and Lounsbery (2013) have a clear focus on physical activity; no one in our profession would argue that physical activity is not important, but physical education should be much more than just physical activity. As physical educators, we argue that physical activity is important, but it is just one of many valued outcomes (National Standards; see SHAPE America, 2014). McKenzie and Lounsbery do not advocate mindless physical activity in schools, but Ennis (2011) suggests that in schools where there is “[physical education] as [physical activity], physical education teachers are discouraged from teaching fundamental motor skills. Without motor skill competence needed to maintain physical activity, redundant exercises, and simple, frantic, but vigorous games lead to a mindless approach to physicality” (p. 15).

McKenzie and Lounsbery (2013) endorse the “the comprehensive school physical activity model” (p. 419), and they seek to place physical education in a public health context. They support the Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2013) report Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School. It is encouraging that the IOM is supporting physical education; however, it does have a narrow physical activity focus. The notion of taking physical education and physical activity to schools (IOM, 2013) originated from a medical model, not an educational approach. My definition of “educational” is derived from Catherine Ennis (2011), who has a clear student-learning focus with a broad curriculum focus, noting:

Educational physical education focuses first and foremost on student learning. The content and scope of the curriculum emphasizes in-depth instruction in a range of physical activities that students need to learn to be physically active; want to learn because the activities lead to opportunities in competitive sports and recreation; and enjoy learning because the activities are meaningful and relevant in their lives today. (p. 6)

In our experiences, we know that we are not operating in schools from a medical model. A public health agenda is part of what we should be doing in schools, but physical education should be much more than that. In our discussions, we should focus on physical education pedagogy—as experts in education, we have knowledge and understanding of schools and teaching and learning in physical education that the medical profession does not possess.

The title of the IOM (2013) report, Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School, appears to illustrate the second policy implication: Schools cannot solve all these problems. As Tinning (2000) asks: Are we expecting too much from our schools? I would like to present now three points that I suggest are worth considering:

1. It is unfair to expect physical education or generalist classroom teachers, on their own, to solve the problem of student inactivity. Too often, they reduce physical
education to just fitness (Powell & Fitzpatrick, 2013). Ward (2013) discusses that we live in a policy environment that requires schools and teachers, rather than social or contextual forces, to be held responsible for academic outcomes: “This policy environment is grounded in an ideology that postulates that schools and teachers, rather than social forces, should be held responsible for academic outcomes, and in turn, economic success” (p. 431).

2. Compounding the difficulty of “solving” health problems is what Rink (2013) refers to as the wide “student potential for learning.” She comments that physical educators can expect to have a range of motor skill abilities in their classes and “physical educators have struggled to find an instructional methodology that would meet the needs of such diverse groups” (p. 410). As Silverman (2011) and Ennis (2011) have suggested, we need more focus on skill development.

3. In addition to motor differences, we also must consider contextual factors: students’ previous experiences, cultural preferences, and economic, social, temporal, and emotional differences. In the teaching and learning process, context does matter—in many gymnasiums, kids do not feel safe, do not feel accepted, are not engaged, and do not take responsibility for their learning (Ennis, 2011; Hellison, 2011).

The third policy implication relates to assessment. Even after all the advocacy, political advocacy, and assessment work Rink (2013) has accomplished in South Carolina and with the National Assessment Task Force (which I had the pleasure to serve on), she still admits that “Teachers are not in control of the many variables that may affect how a student performs, and this makes the use of absolute standardized test scores a real problem for identifying effective teachers” (Rink, 2013, p. 410). Nonetheless, there is hope for authentic assessment in physical education. Rink concludes that the South Carolina experience with state-level assessment was a positive one, and she would support the idea that “high-stakes assessment is not needed to produce change but some level of accountability is needed” (p. 413). Rink concludes “that some level of accountability is necessary in our field to make significant change” (p. 407).

Rink (2013) admits that in South Carolina, “The goal was to identify minimal expectations for student learning that could be achieved by all students with effective instruction. One of the major criticisms of standardized testing is that it narrows the curriculum to what is tested” (p. 411). Our field needs to careful that we do not go down a similar road to No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Evaluation and assessment of physical education in schools, as Rink articulates in her article, is fraught with problems. Unfortunately, when we are dealing with a large number of standards, minimal accountability appears to be the norm, as illustrated by the impact of NCLB. Darling-Hammond’s (2007) reflections on NCLB are telling: “Among these consequences are a narrowed curriculum, focused on the low-level skills generally reflected on high stakes tests” (p. 245). I am concerned with McKenzie and Lounsbery’s (2013) statement that “The IOM (2013) recently identified SOFIT as an appropriate surveillance tool for [physical education] across the nation, and advances in technology now permit observational data to be entered, stored, and analyzed using handheld computers, making the methodology now much more appealing” (p. 422) because it is defined as “close watch.” If teachers feel they are under scrutiny or investigation, they will make sure that their scores are high. This is analogous to teachers teaching to the test (cf. NCLB), and the many issues that emerge from this kind of close watch on teachers do not bode well for quality physical education experiences.

Moving forward into the 21st century, I suggest that we view assessment from different perspectives. Hay (2006) provides an approach to assessment through a social-critical political lens that is worthy of our consideration. Hay and Penney (2013) define assessment as: “any action of information collection within education settings that is initiated for the purpose of making some interpretive judgments about students” (p. 6). They point out many nations want to be competitive in the international arena, which has an impact on the education policies and funding opportunities. Such expectations have a direct impact on curriculum development and pedagogical practices in many schools. Hay argues that assessments do not occur in a vacuum, but they have an impact on the child and their environment. In addition, from the big picture, assessment must be seen in the social, cultural, temporal, economic, and political contexts, and these need to be taken into account. Hay and Penney remind us that assessment plays a powerful role in communicating value within and across schools and educational systems. My point is that our view of assessment is too narrow and assessments in schools are problematic so we need to be open to other perspectives, keep students in mind, and further scholarship and inquiry.

FINAL COMMENT

I believe that physical education is much broader than just physical activity, and we harm the future potential of our field if we adopt a narrow agenda. Our area needs to grapple with the question: What is the content of most worth? More scholarship may be required to answer this question. At present, the scholarship of pedagogical knowledge in physical education and PCK in physical education is superficially addressed by our field. And if we are going to hold teachers and students accountable, we need to think
deeply, carefully, and deliberately about what we are holding them accountable for, particularly related to student learning. We need to create assessments focused on the learning process, as well as on outcomes, and they need to be authentic, relevant, and meaningful to both teachers and students. If we in physical education pedagogy do not do this, someone else will do this for us—or to us.

Looking to the future, I suggest that we also broaden the kinds of research that we value, support, and appreciate in our field. These research approaches could be applied to the areas covered by the three articles: content knowledge, physical activity, and assessment. For example, after 5 years working with NASPE on the assessment task force (Dyson, Placek, et al., 2011; Fox et al., 2011; Zhu, Fox, et al., 2011; Zhu, Placek, et al., 2011), I would argue that “standards” and “assessment” are areas that require an investment of our time and energy. It requires not only data collection through quantitative methodologies, but excavation in a collaborative process using qualitative processes and mixed-methods approaches. We need more collaborative approaches with participant involvement. We do too much research “on” and not enough research “with” teachers, students, administrators, and parents. We need research methodologies that include both quantitative and qualitative methods. In my experience, I have found qualitative research (Hemphill, Templin, Richards, & Blankenship, 2012), action research (Casey, Dyson, & Campbell, 2009), practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), and mixed-methods research (Greene, 2007) approaches to be of particular value in school-based research. Other areas to explore are equity scholarship (Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014; Gard, 2006; Kirk, 2010) and indigenous research (Bishop, 2005; Rossi, Rynne, & Nelson, 2013; Tipi, 2013), as well as using a focus on student-learning outcomes. Grant and Giddings (2002) suggest, and I agree, that we explore several different paradigms and different types of methodologies, such as interpretative, post-positivist, post-structuralist, and critical theory (Macdonald et al., 2002).

In closing, I want to reiterate that I admire the authors and their contributions to our field. I know, like myself, they have spent many hours in schools—observing and reflecting on quality physical education. Although we have different approaches or degrees of difference about how it might get done, I believe that we share the same goal—we want young people to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

WHAT DOES THIS ARTICLE ADD?

I respect and admire the work of Rink, McKenzie, and Ward, who are leading academics in our field. Their manuscripts provide food for thought for the field of physical education. The discussion in this article draws our attention to the broader notion of “quality teaching” in physical education rather than “teacher effectiveness” in physical education. I call for further inquiry into “content knowledge” and “pedagogical knowledge” for physical education. I also suggest that we view assessment from different perspectives, including a social-critical perspective. A further argument is presented for a more holistic approach to physical education than is presented in the three articles, emphasizing that we need to educate the whole child! In the future, I suggest that we broaden the kinds of scholarship and research that we value, support, and appreciate in our field.

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REFERENCES


